

British School at Rome: Strategic Plan 2022-32

Context

The British School at Rome is the largest British centre of interdisciplinary research excellence based in the European Union, supporting the full range of arts, humanities and social sciences. We are the largest of the eight British Independent Research Institutes (BIRI), partially funded by UK government and representing the best of UK research practice across the wider Mediterranean region, Middle East and North Africa. The BSR has built up an environment for work of international standing and impact from Britain and the Commonwealth, a bridge into the intellectual and cultural heart of Rome and Italy, and a key vantage-point for the understanding of the Mediterranean region as a whole.

The BSR promotes:

- residential awards for artists and architects
- residential awards for research in the archaeology, history, art history, society and culture of Italy and the Mediterranean region
- a multidisciplinary programme of lectures, workshops, conferences and events
- internationally collaborative research projects, including archaeological excavation and fieldwork
- research collections including a specialist library, photographic collection and archive
- monograph publications of research and our highly rated journal, *Papers of the British School at Rome*
- the curation of exhibitions
- specialist taught courses.

Our Ten-Year Vision

In 2032 the BSR will be a modern, open, inclusive and plural institution that welcomes people from a wide range of backgrounds, from across the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and beyond, to a stimulating, nurturing environment of interdisciplinary research and practice where work of the very highest quality is generated and facilitated in a transformative intellectual context.

To achieve this vision our focus will be on the following 4 priorities:

1. *The BSR will embed a deep commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion into everything it does and take concrete steps to overcome barriers to access to its awards and community.*
2. *The BSR will generate and facilitate new, field-defining research projects and practices across the disciplines.*
3. *The BSR will strengthen its international collaborations across the EU and the Commonwealth, developing them in a sustainable manner.*
4. *The BSR will secure its activities on a strong financial base for the future.*

1. *The BSR will embed a deep commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion into everything it does and take concrete steps to overcome barriers to access to its awards and community.*

Vision for 2032

By 2032 BSR will represent a fully plural community where opportunities are taken up by individuals coming from a diverse range of backgrounds and contexts.

The BSR's commitment to plurality will bring it up to date as a modern institution enacting the conviction that all research and practice are most cutting-edge when they encompass the greatest diversity of voices, and that a diverse community is a stronger and more successful community that is better equipped to serve its various stakeholders. Concrete steps to increase access across the board will require new funding to be in place in the longer term to support new infrastructure and support for those coming from under-represented or disadvantaged communities.

Timeline:

In development

- Review and upgrade web content for prospective applicants for BSR awards to provide a better level of support to applicants from under-represented catchments
- Review and upgrade advertising strategies for membership of our governance bodies, staff and awards, to reach new catchments that better and more authentically represent our global community in all our areas of endeavour
- Ensure awards selection processes are competitive, fair, transparent and inclusive
- Bed in new artist's residency targeted at early-career artists from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (funding secured for three years, 2023-25), including developing links with Rome-based Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic artists and collectives
- Bed in new, more flexible package of residential opportunities for residents with caring responsibilities
- Scope possible upgrade of designated second-floor space in the residency to create new family accommodation

Long-term aspirations (within 10 years)

- Seek and secure new funding for continuation of the residency for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic artists after 2025
- Secure funding for new awards and residencies aimed at communities that have traditionally been under-represented at the BSR
- Secure funding to offer a 'living out allowance' for fellows who cannot be accommodated at the BSR
- Scope possibilities for a non-residential studio in the BSR grounds for artists and architects with families who live outside the residency

2. *The BSR will generate and facilitate new, field-defining research projects and practices across the disciplines.*

Vision for 2032

By 2032 the BSR will have furthered its recognised field-leading distinction in archaeology, humanities and fine arts, built new programmes arising from its special collections, and reinvigorated the architecture programme.

The BSR has a key role in generating and facilitating research projects at the heart of Europe, with access to the Horizon Europe funding schemes and wide networks across the EU. We also play a significant role in identifying and facilitating excellence in research and practice via our awards schemes, which offer opportunities to outstanding individuals to pursue their projects in Rome while making use of our deep and wide networks. Artists and architects who spend time in BSR studio space develop their practice in response to the contexts of Rome and Italy and take their work in significant new directions. The BSR is a recognised European leader in archaeological geophysical prospection, conducting its own research programme and supporting international collaborations through its in-house staff. The BSR's special, photographic and archival collections are a key resource on which to build new research activity. All of this work will continue and grow in future, building on the BSR's wide network of international collaborators.

Timeline:

In development

- Maintain and develop our international programme of non-invasive archaeological research, building on an existing network developed over 20 years and through identification of funding streams to maintain and enhance equipment
- Develop grant funding bids to take forward major BSR-based research projects, including in archaeology and those with a focus on our special collections
- Develop new fine arts projects with a range of collaborators to increase visibility and reach of the programme and greater use of gallery space
- Work with our sister BIRI to take forward strategic research projects building on our site-specific expertise across a wide geographical base
- Continue to create opportunities for academic development of in-house staff in order to retain the best people and enable them to become leading researchers, build up in-house research expertise and increase the wider academic profile of the BSR across the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS)
- Clearly articulate the BSR's fundamental interdisciplinarity as a unique selling point of Rome-based residencies and a core underpinning of funding applications
- Conduct ongoing analysis of application field to BSR awards in order to scope future priorities for funding and build them into development plan
- Continue to make acquisitions in all key areas of the collection to maintain its status as a high-quality research resource.
- Disseminate BSR-branded publishing opportunities widely to award-holders and alumni to build visibility of BSR-facilitated research

Long-term aspirations (within 10 years)

- Continue to build formal partnerships with UK and Commonwealth Higher Education institutions (HEIs), seeding opportunities for research awards, staff mobility and collaborative grant applications
- Develop engagements with fashion, design, curation and social innovation, building networks with world-leading Italian practitioners, including via the public events programme
- Develop new ERC funding bids around Architecture, design and social innovation
- In collaboration with the BIRI and URBiS networks, support and enhance digital infrastructure around our special, photographic and archival collections to ensure interoperability and long-term preservation of data and images
- Develop and launch digital exhibition and publishing platforms to offer opportunities for new kinds of interdisciplinary outputs

3. *The BSR will strengthen its international collaborations across the EU and the Commonwealth, developing them in a sustainable manner.*

Vision for 2032

By 2032 the BSR will have extended its range of opportunities to bring in new partnerships from the EU and from Commonwealth countries

The BSR is the UK's largest-scale research institution located in **Europe**, inside the EU. It has a highly significant role to play in maintaining and building collaborations between the UK research sector and European partners, both independently and in collaboration with other BIRI. Through our research collaborations with UK HEIs we bring UK-based researchers across the AHSS to Europe, connecting them to sources of funding, to EU universities and research bodies and to creative arts foundations and providing a venue for collaborative ventures. Our location in **Rome** is a key part of this remit. The BSR's Roman networks and collaborations are historically strong and vibrant. In addition, Rome is the home of a second nation state, the Vatican City, and is the headquarters for various United Nations Agencies as well as housing the research and fine-arts academies of three dozen other countries, and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the European Space Agency Centre for Earth Observation. The BSR has collaborated with all these bodies and agencies, on subjects ranging from cultural heritage in war zones to climate change. The BSR's historic mission includes offering opportunities to partners from **the Commonwealth**, offering a gateway to sustain and further develop international collaboration in research, innovation and the creative industries. In all its international endeavours, the BSR seeks to establish sustainable modes of interaction and collaboration.

Timeline

In development

- Maintain and develop a vibrant public events programme that is hybrid and therefore international in its reach, does not necessitate unsustainable international travel and is supported by state-of-the-art technology
- Build on collaborations with partners including the Ministero della Cultura and the Soprintendenza as well as international universities to continue the excavations at *Falerii novi*
- Secure and develop collaborations between BSR resident artists and Italian artists and collectives, including opportunities for exhibitions
- Secure renewed funding for existing Commonwealth residencies in architecture, fine arts and archaeology
- Build on and develop new collaborations across Humanities and Social Sciences

Long-term aspirations (within 10 years)

- Develop new bilateral fellowship schemes with UK HEIs, providing access to European funding for UK researchers
- Scope and secure funded residencies for early-career architects with new Commonwealth partners, focussing on Asia and Africa

- Scope and secure further funded residencies with Commonwealth partners across the BSR's target disciplines

4. *The BSR will secure its activities on a strong financial base for the future.*

Vision for 2032

By 2032 the BSR will be fully financially sustainable with a successful record of grant capture, a revived membership base and a strong donor campaign to fund new activities.

As the BSR recovers from the pandemic and embeds new governance and operational structures, securing a sustainable financial base on which to build for the future is vital. Various important changes in our operational strategy since 2021 have increased costs, including investment in high-level, in-house HR provision and security for the residence. New challenges must be met including rising prices for utilities and other services. The BSR achieves world-class research on a very lean budget, with around 50% of income expended on a hard-working and dedicated staff. With limited opportunities for further cost savings, the focus will be on maximising use of the residency and lecture theatre, successful grant capture, donor funding and increased memberships, in the context of good governance and risk management, in order to raise funds for the future.

Timeline:

In development

- Revitalise the BSR membership offer and build the membership base
- Revitalise the Ashby Patrons scheme and recruit new members
- Review and revise all pricing structures for awards, residence and taught courses
- Build the academic staff base through externally funded fellowship schemes (e.g. British Academy, Marie-Sklodowska Curie, Wellcome Trust, Leverhulme)
- Secure external grant funding via applications from our own staff and as collaborative partners, for projects building on our in-house strengths and special collections, targeting in particular Horizon Europe opportunities.
- Collaborate with the other BIRI to complete the steps to apply for IRO status from the UK government, in order to secure UKRI funding including infrastructure grants
- Develop a fully costed menu of options for donor funding, including attractive ways to contribute to ongoing core costs

Long-term aspirations (within 10 years)

- Secure an endowed early-career fellowship in Archaeology
- Build further development activity around the scoping of new research priorities and securing funding for targeted awards
- Launch a donor campaign to support the development of new special collections and archive spaces above the current library
- Rebuild reserves for a sustainable future